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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2130
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0173
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2443
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2744
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIRUT 000812

SIPDIS

NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/YERGER/GAVITO
INL FOR JOHNSON/BLOOMQUIST/STUART

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: BRITISH, DANISH READY TO TERMINATE BORDER
SECURITY COOPERATION WITH GERMANS

REF: A. BEIRUT 00695

[B](#). WARD/IRWIN E-MAIL

[C](#). BEIRUT 00688

[D](#). BEIRUT 00625

[E](#). BEIRUT 00128

[F](#). BEIRUT 00435

Classified By: CDA Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#). (C) At a May 30 donor coordination meeting, British and Danish reps said their missions are fed up with German mismanagement and willful disregard for donor wishes. Both countries are on the verge of terminating their role in the Northern Border Pilot Project (NBPP) when the pilot phase ends on July 1. Despite the fact that a well-organized (and British authored) plan for future cooperation was adopted by EU heads of mission in early May and distributed to other donors on May 7, the Germans decided to consider this paper "merely a suggestion" and proceeded to rewrite the entire paper during the week of May 12, when all other donor embassies were preoccupied with the violent clashes in the streets of Beirut. We are told that this "revised" paper will be submitted to Prime Minister Siniora on June 1 during the German Foreign Minister's visit to Lebanon.

[2](#). (C) While the German Project Implementation Unit (PIU) was busily writing in their Beirut offices, problems in the field continued. German-installed generators are faulty and unable to provide a reliable and stable power source to all of the field stations for at least one more month. Though U.S. and British electronic equipment is installed and functional, it cannot be used for operational purposes until the power issues are resolved.

[3](#). (C) British and Danish donor reps are at a loss as to how to get through to the Germans and the EU sent a formal letter criticizing the new German paper. "We keep taking one step forward, and five very expensive steps backward. It is time to pull the plug." Both said their countries will continue to support border security initiatives and implementation of UNSCR 1701, but bilateral programs seem to be a more practical and effective approach at this time. They have indicated a willingness to explore joint programs with the U.S. in the future. End Summary.

Progress on the ground stalled again

¶4. (C) Per Ref B, early May showed signs of progress on the ground and improved coordination for future border security cooperation projects. On May 5, the Charge visited the NBPP Common Operations Center and the northern border crossing of Arida. We were shown that USG-donated equipment was installed and functional, with a few power supply issues remaining in some of the field stations. In the last three weeks, it became apparent that German-installed generators are not capable of providing steady and secure power to run the equipment. Further technical adjustments are required, which the PIU told us will take at least one month. (Note: British and Danish reps, who have colleagues on the ground in Tripoli full-time, said this is another problem which could have been nipped in the bud if the Germans left their Beirut offices and went to the field on a regular basis. End Note.) Bottom line -- the NBPP will not have been fully functional at any point during the six month pilot phase.

EU Strategic Plan Rewritten by the Germans Solo

¶5. (C) Per reftels A and B, the British succeeded in drafting and winning support for a comprehensive organizational structure for future border cooperation. The British have shown tremendous technical expertise during the entire NBPP. They have maintained a constant presence at the Tripoli headquarters for the Common Border Force (CBF), paid for a project planning officer to join the PIU staff in late 2007, brought in high-level military experts to perform assessments and provide recommendations, and have been extremely active in consulting with other donors. The British-authored plan

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was formally adopted by local EU heads of mission, including the German Ambassador, in early May and shared with other donors (ref A).

¶6. (C) Shortly after the paper was sent to donors, we were told that Berlin considered this not a binding document of EU donor intent -- but "merely a suggestion," saying the matter would be decided between Prime Minister Siniora and Chancellor Merkel themselves. Just as Lebanon entered into a full-blown political crisis on May 8, the PIU organized a series of "drafting sessions" to plan for the future. Apparently they were the only ones in the room. Notes were sent out, with short and unrealistic turn around times, asking for donors to concur with the German intent to model future border work on the NBPP with "turn-key" projects (i.e. the Germans would not act as coordinators) and dismissing the need to "mentor" CBF personnel as they took on dangerous new missions in the north.

¶7. (C) This is apparently the straw that broke the camel's back. The British Ambassador told the German Ambassador that if this was the plan Germany wanted, it would almost surely proceed without significant support from the international donor community. The Danish Ambassador also expressed his disapproval of this new document.

¶8. (C) The EU Head of Delegation, Patrick Laurent, put similar concerns in a letter to the German Ambassador on May 16. Specifically, Laurent said the new proposal "went beyond the agreed conclusions of the EU heads of mission", that "geographical extension is subject to a number of conditions", noted Germany's offer to take the lead on future planning but that "the set-up needs to be discussed with donors before it is proposed to the beneficiary", and asked that the plan be reformulated "in a manner which would not imply any EU donor engagement beyond the agreed upon position." Laurent is out of the country until mid-June and will not be able to advocate for the EU paper before the arrival of the German Foreign Minister on June 1.

Brits and Danes Examine Bilateral Projects

¶9. (C) On May 29, British and Danish Ambassadors met to discuss the current state of affairs. They both have instructed their staffs to begin exploring bilateral options for border security cooperation.

- The Danes will unlikely be able to completely detach themselves from the German PIU. The Danish FM had personally pledged Danish cooperation to the Germans and it is likely that Copenhagen will insist on a least a nominal cooperative presence. "We'll probably just have one guy stick around the PIU for a while, but no financial resources will be placed at the disposal of the PIU." During the NBPP, the Danes were instrumental in setting up an "executive secretariat" to address all of the CBF's training needs. There are two Danes on the ground full-time and, as a bilateral initiative, they may augment this staff with additional experts.

-- The Brits are still very committed to border security and will likely continue to "mentor" the staff of the UK-financed CBF Common Operations Center. In light of recent violent clashes in the north and the presence illegal weapons, "there is still much work to be done there and we already have working relationships in place." They will explore future border cooperation with Lebanese naval forces in the north and, nation-wide, may likely begin to take a lead role in helping the GOL amend, update, and modernize its military doctrine. "We would likely begin on an academic-level, but the time has come for the LAF to focus on long-term strategic planning which utilizes all of the assets recently provided by international donors."

Comment - How Could We Continue to Help?

¶10. (C) Prime Minister Siniora, currently PM-designate as he works to form a new government, has been devoted to German leadership for border security, despite negative feedback from other donors. If the Brits and Danes walk away from the multilateral effort, it might be time for the USG to also

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consider providing our future support on a bilateral basis.

¶11. (C) The French stayed out of the NBPP and adopted border security upgrades at the Beirut International Airport (BIA) as their "donation." Working with Internal Security Forces and General Security, they provided training, luggage and cargo screening equipment and other upgrades to bring BIA in line with international standards. If the USG decides to support the upgrading of the northern airport of Kleyate for commercial air traffic, perhaps existing INL funds reserved for border security could be used to address border security needs for this airport. (Note: It will be important to explore this idea on a technical level to determine if the U.S. is able to provide a system which is compatible to, and interoperable with, the French-funded system at the BIA. It will be important to ensure that systems are harmonized at Lebanon's two international airports. End Note.)

¶12. (C) Security for Kleyate would be a deliverable that shows we continue to care about UNSCR 1701 implementation, could help leverage existing U.S. and UK assets in the NBPP, and would help consolidate security in the north, where the impact of smuggled weapons was evident during the recent violent clashes. End Comment.
SISON